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shoul and subsequent microscopic study of relevant #tissues after elaborate processing by technicians. One or two months may be required in some cases.

post

the country. Within any one state, practices can vary, legally. W[illegible] Maryland, where the President's body was taken, as elsewhere, state autopsy regulations do not apply to those performed on federal property. Private studies evaluate autopsy practices in some states as entirely inadequate.

Dr. John Nichols, Professor of Pathology at the University of Kansas, informs me that "In a few states the laws are quite loose and the coroner himself can legally do the autopsy even if he is a truck driver in complete ignorance of things medical". On the other hand, in Connecticut, "it is a legal requirement that the pathologist be 'certified'," meaning by the American Board of Pathology. As I also learned, a pathologist (expertise in determination of the cause of death from natural causes, may be without the required competence when he probes for the actual cause of death in crimes of violence.

~~[illegible]~~ When I learned from my own local officials that getting a definitive statement of the State of Maryland minimum autopsy requirements would be impossible or meaningless, on May [illegible], 1966, I tried the District of Columbia, which is under federal control. [illegible] phone call to the coroner's office there was quite informative until it was clear my interest was in what would the autopsy protocol have contained had it been that of a President? Until that moment the requirements were explained with care. In the final analysis the results of the autopsy are no better than the person doing it.

Suppose a man had been shot to death, I was told, and there were two bullets in his body, or two bullet holes. The autopsy examination would include taking his body apart to actually trace the paths of both bullets. If the bullets were fired from different weapons or by different people,

Autopsies done in teaching hospitals of medical schools in cases of natural death are usually searching and exhaustive. Most advances in medicine were obtained at the autopsy table. Autopsies also done in such hospitals at request of a coroner, who may be a non-medical person elected by popular vote, are also ## usually of a high standard. However, medico legal autopsies done in less diciplined instituti ns frequently fall short of obtaining all possible evidence to convict the guilty and acquit the innocent. The Naval Hospital in Bethesda is the pride and joy of the Navy. It should be the capstone of American (world) medicine ????

otherwise the purpose of the autopsy has not been achived.

the autopsy must to show which had been fatal. When a derelict is shot to death in the District of Columbia, this is what happens. "Just the other day", I was told, there had been a case like [illegible] And I was assured, there is no body clue [illegible] flesh rent by bullets.

With a bum in the District of Columbia, where the President lives, this is what happens. With the President, examined across the boundary line, in a federal hospital in Maryland, with autopsy surgeons on the federal payroll, it is what didn't happen - but should - and could [illegible]

Dr. Nichols is making a study of the Kennedy autopsy. He has already published a "Special Contribution" in the July 10, 1967, Journal of the American Medical Association. His earlier researches indicate that the President did have Addison's disease, an adrenal deficiency. His medical sleuthing was careful and detailed, extending backward through medical annals and newspapers for a period of 10 years. While he found it "noteworthy" there was no evidence this ailment ever handicapped the President, that he despite it "was continuously engaged in strenuous mental and physical activity." Dr. Nichols also felt impelled to comment that "the autopsy protocol is "curiously silent" on the Addison's disease "as well as on details of the pituitary, of his vertebral column and sacro-iliac joints".

The reader will recall that the President had survived repeated almost-fatal spinal surgery.

There is no stigma attached to Addison's disease, Dr. Nichols concluded, and control over it can be maintained more perfectly than, for example, over diabetes. It need never have interefered with his activities as President.

There can be little disagreement with Dr. Nichols' opinion "that the public is entitled to knowledge of the health of their Chief Executive and candidates for this office", [illegible] one of the possible explanations [illegible]

is "strange silence" in the autopsy is "suppression...by relat[illegible] federal officials, or both". There may be doubt about the inspirat[illegible] the suppression but not about the fact of it.

A number of scientists and scientific groups have commented unfavorably about the Presidnet's autopsy examination and report, its conspicuous deficiencies and inadequacies and the exclusion of all non-mi[illegible] personnel from the examination. Because Dr. Nichols is of unquestioned medical qualification and is making a study of this particular autopsy [illegible]

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~~to be present~~. The body must be absolutely identified. The protocol on the late President does not indicate that he was identified!! The body must be weighed, measured and inspected all over; all orifices must be examined, ~~especially the vagina in the female~~. Sketches with measurements must be made of any unusual findings together with color and black-white pictures. These photographs should be taken by the pathologist himself ~~so one less person will be subpoenaed for the defense to tangle up at trial~~. They should also be developed by the pathologist himself. Entry and exit bullet holes must be recorded with precision. The pathologist himself should x-ray the body completely. The films must be developed and inspected prior to starting the autopsy; this may require 15 minutes but knowing the number and position of bullets is important as well as broken bones, tips of knife blades, etc. The pathologist keeps the film negatives himself to use at trial.

The remainder of the autopsy is somewhat like the usual hospital case. Of course, blood must be drawn for subsequent possible examination for poisons [illegible] and inspected very [illegible]

"where the deceased was [illegible] chest six times while pre[illegible]ably" asleep in bed. The accused confessed. However, microscopic exa[illegible]tion of the heart revealed death occurred four hours prior to shooting. The accused was relased because you cannot kill a dead man."

Nothing like this was involved in the President's murder, but the same principles are, the same scientific, medical, and legal requirements - which were not met. When the examination was conducted, there was a live [illegible] to be defended in court. After he, in turn, was murdered, a "revised" autopsy report, which would not be subject to cross-examination - for [illegible] was then nothing to take to court - was filed. It was suppressed for [illegible] months and then only partly released, with the mass and sensation of [illegible]

Report, which submerged it and denied it the close scrutiny it re[illegible] thus escaped.

There is nothing right about this autopsy, nothing final, not[illegible] that satisfies the need for definitive, irrefutable fact. It is [illegible] incomplete, incompetent, lacking honesty and objectivity in its re[illegible] in every single official use and misuse that was made of it, begi[illegible] suppression and continuing with gutting.

We have as a national record, a final memento of a President, [illegible] eviscerated autopsy report in eviscerated files - eviscerated evidence, [illegible]cerated history.

extra space

This, unfortunately, is not untypical. It is the total [illegible] of the evidence, all the investigation, all files and records.

For this President the archive is adequately served with [illegible] closer to original than carbon copies and Xeroxes of them of uncertain [illegible] generation; altered and incomplete documents; doctored pictures never original, never properly introduced into evidence (none of the vital one[illegible] not a single one - in accordance with the minimum requirements of law), only those that could not be avoided - then only when they could no longer be avoided; and unstinted, uninhibited suppression, with each of those agencies having a vested interest in suppression exclusively empowered to decide upon and effectuate it.

This archival monument to the President is like the investigation [illegible] his murder, for that, too, was of conspicuous incompleteness, designed [illegible] dishonesty and calculated indefiniteness. Essential witnesses were [illegible] sought nor called, their evidence denied the solution of the crime and [illegible] Evidence was destroyed. Its destruction was virtually assured by official [illegible] inaction and action - in the case of the pictures, as PHOTOGRAPHIC WITNESSES, records and documents with the Commission's own until-then suppressed [illegible] and in the case of the landmarks vital to photo intelligence.